

Message Text

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ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00
EB-08 INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 HA-05 DODE-00 PA-01
ICA-11 SP-02 /078 W
-----069585 111235Z /64 43

R 111128Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6487
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USMISSION GENEVA

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USEEC

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, SHUM, PINT
SUBJ: A POST-MORTEM OF THE WFTU CONGRESS

REFS: (A) BRUSSELS 7840 (NOTAL); (B) PRAGUE 1080; (C)
PARIS 13442

1. OFFICIALS OF THE WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR (WCL) HAVE A STRONGLY NEGATIVE VIEW OF THE CONGRESS THAT THE WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS (WFTU) HELD IN PRAGUE IN APRIL, AND HAVE VOICED THEIR CRITICISMS BOTH PRIVATELY AND PUBLICLY.

2. THE PUBLIC CRITICISM APPEARED IN THE LATEST ISSUE OF "FLASH," THE WCL'S BIMONTHLY PRESS BULLETIN. A FLASH ARTICLE ON THE WFTU CONGRESS QUOTED EXTENSIVELY FROM A SPEECH THAT GERARD FONTENEAU, WCL ASSISTANT GENERAL SECRETARY, GAVE IN PRAGUE (REFTEL A), AND ALSO CONTAINED A COMMENTARY WITH THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

--THE CONGRESS PRODUCED A "VALUABLE" DOCUMENT, A "UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS," BUT "THE QUESTION IS: WAS THE DOCUMENT APPROVED TO TRY TO TRANSLATE IT INTO REALITY IN ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE WORLD, OR ONLY IN CAPITALIST COUNTRIES? WE POSE THIS QUESTION BECAUSE FOR THE USSR TRADE UNIONS, FOR EXAMPLE, THERE IS NO PROBLEM OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS IN THE SOVIET UNION--WHICH IS NOT TRUE."

--THE CONGRESS, BILLED IN ADVANCE AS BEING "OPEN-MINDED," TURNED OUT TO BE "CLOSE-MINDED." EXAMPLES GIVEN: "THERE WAS NO DEBATE, CERTAIN SUBJECTS WERE TABOO, AND THE SPEECHES WERE MOSTLY A SERIES OF PROCLAMATIONS IN A FIXED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TERMINOLOGY."

--MOREOVER, THE CONGRESS IGNORED THE BASIC NEEDS OF THE WORKERS: "THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS OF THE RURAL AND URBAN MASSES OF THE THIRD WORLD, LIKE THE STRUGGLES FOR LIBERATION, WERE TREATED IN A MANNER THAT COULD SUIT ONLY THE DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC INTERESTS OF THE SOVIET UNION."

3. IN A MEETING WITH THREE BRUSSELS-BASED LABOR ATTACHES (INCLUDING USEC'S) ON MAY 9, WCL GENERAL SECRETARY JAN KULAKOWSKI AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY FONTENEAU ADDED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO THAT PUBLISHED IN FLASH:

--EASTERN EUROPEAN DELEGATES STOMPED THEIR FEET LOUDLY DURING PARTS OF FONTENEAU'S SPEECH. AT ONE POINT, THE EAST GERMANS SOUGHT, UNSUCCESSFULLY, TO GET FONTENEAU DECLARED OUT OF ORDER AND HAVE HIM REMOVED FROM THE MICROPHONE.

--LESS THAN HALF THE 1,200 PERSONS IN ATTENDANCE WERE FROM ORGANIZATIONS UNAFFILIATED WITH THE WFTU. IN FACT,

ABOUT 20 CAME FROM THE U.S. AND CANADA. BY THE
WCL'S COUNT, 11 ICFTU AFFILIATES WERE PRESENT, AND "THEY
ALL KEPT QUIET."
--THOUGHT NOT PUBLICIZED, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SPANISH
WORKERS' COMMISSIONS "MADE AN INTERVENTION AS STRONG AS"
THAT OF GEORGES SEGUY OF THE FRENCH CGT (REF B AND C).

4. USEC LABATT SOUGHT TO EXPLORE WITH KULAKOWSKI WHY, IN
HIS VIEW, THE CONGRESS HAD TURNED OUT DIFFERENTLY FROM
ITS BILLING. HAD IT BEEN MISREPRESENTED IN ADVANCE?
HAD ITS SPONSORS CHANGED THEIR MINDS? HAD EXPECTATIONS
BEEN NAIVE? KULAKOWSKI RESPONDED SOMEWHAT DEFENSIVELY,

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ICA-11 SP-02 /078 W

-----069596 111836Z /64 43

R 111128Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
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SAYING THE WCL "KNEW ONLY WHAT THE WFTU TOLD US, AND WE
HAD TO PLAY THE GAME ACCORDINGLY."

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5. HE THEN WENT ON TO DEFEND THE WCL'S PRESENCE AT THE
CONGRESS: THE WCL HAD NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT CHANGING THE
MINDS OF THOSE IN THE COMMUNIST APPARATUS, BUT THE
"CONFRONTATION AT PRAGUE"--PRESUMABLY FONTENEAU'S WORDS
BUT CHIEFLY THOSE OF SEGUY--WAS PRODUCING A "DISARRAY"
IN THE WFTU'S RANKS, SINCE THE CONGRESS DEMONSTRATED, AS
NOTHING ELSE COULD, THE TRUE NATURE OF THE WFTU.

6. WOULD THE RESULTS OF THE PRAGUE CONGRESS CAUSE ANY
CHANGE IN WCL-WFTU RELATIONS? THE WCL SECRETARIAT HAS
AN ANNUAL MEETING WITH THE WFTU SECRETARIAT, NOT IN A
CONTEXT OF COOPERATION "BUT FOR AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS,"
AS FONTENEAU PUT IT. THESE ANNUAL MEETINGS, WHICH
KULAKOWSKI CHARACTERIZED AS "CONFRONTATIONS," WOULD
CONTINUE, KULAKOWSKI SAID. HE ADDED STRIDENTLY: "THE
WFTU IS A REALITY. TO IGNORE REALITY IS DANGEROUS. IT
IS BETTER TO CONFRONT THAT REALITY THAN TO PRETEND IT
DOESN'T EXIST." HINTON

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Message Attributes

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